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HISTORY

OF THE

MORMONS,

OR,

LATTER-DAY SAINTS,

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF

THEIR PERSECUTIONS

IN MISSOURI AND ILLINOIS.

From an authentic Source,

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1844.

HISTORY

OF THE

LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

In giving an account, as I am now to do, of the persecutions of the Mormons in Missouri and Illinois the first a slave and the last a *free* state, as in the case of the slave-owners in the south, let it be understood that I neither praise nor blame individuals ;—their characters like our own were formed for them ; but I trust this account will be found useful to Chartists, Sturgites, Repealers, and all others who expect liberty security and happiness from democratic or any other merely political changes in our institutions, unless attended with an enlightened Education and rational societarian arrangements. It will be seen by the following account, that all the public and private persecution and prosecutions that have been endured by Chartists, Socialists, Infidels, and others in this country, including the Manchester Massacre, Repeal, Chartist, and Infidel imprisonments during the last twenty-five years, are trifles compared to the persecutions and sufferings the Mormons endured in one year under the boasted free and democratic government of the United States of America, The persecution of the Jews and Poles by the Emperor Nicholas was not more tyrannical or atrocious, and I have good reason to believe that these persecutions were, in a great

degree at least, unmerited. I found many of the calumnious stories told of the Mormons in different parts of the country utterly false when I arrived at Nauvoo; such as the drunken and disorderly character of the people, Joe Smith keeping a number of *virgins* for his own use, &c. There were not above three or four public houses that I could hear of in the city. We did not see one person drunk, one idle person lurking about, or one instance of strife or disorderly conduct among the populace during the four days we were there; and there was no other foundation for the report of Joe's kept virgins but that *he, as guardian to several orphan girls supported and employed them as servants to do work at his hotel;* and no man could be more attentive than he was to his wife, who lay ill in bed at that time: a great portion of his time was spent with her, and her doctor was there several times every day; and from what we saw of those orphan girls—and we sat at tea with them every meal—they were, I believe, as modest, chaste, and virtuous girls as can be found. There is no doubt Joe Smith and his prophets and elders are great impostors—that they have induced their dupes to believe a great number of the most superstitious and absurd dogmas, and more especially in their own inspiration, visits of angels, power to work miracles, &c., and that by these means they obtain a large amount of property from these silly people; but these are matters that concern themselves as a society, and with which others have nothing to do.

There appear to me to be three or four causes for the bad feelings of the people of Missouri and Illinois towards the Mormons. The tenacity of the Mormons in claiming and maintaining their right to vote at elections, and their not joining either of the two great political parties of Whigs and Locofocus, by voting alternately with both parties, and generally voting in a body, being numerous, they have the power of turning the elections in any way they please; hence they

are hated and feared by both parties, because they can secure the election of those most friendly to themselves; hence they are suspected of intending to usurp the whole power of the government of the state in which they live. The next objection which applies particularly to their residence in Missouri, was their *living in a slave state, and owning no slaves*, which was an unpardonable offence against the slave-holders. The third cause of hatred was their strange superstitions, and railings against a hired priesthood, which set all the priests, bigots, and fanatics of the country against them as infidels, heathens, and enemies of all religion; and this party were their most bitter and unrelenting persecutors.

I shall allow the Mormons to relate their persecutions and sufferings in Missouri themselves, being the evidence on oath of Joseph Smith's witnesses on his trial before the municipal court of Nauvoo on the 1st of July 1843, on a charge made against him by the governor of the state of Missouri, for treason against the state and escaping from justice.

Lyman Wight, late colonel of the militia of Clay, county Missouri, sworn, says, "he has been acquainted with Joseph Smith, senior, for the last twelve years. That he, Lyman Wight, removed to the state of Missouri in the year 1831, when the church of Jesus Christ of latter-day saints was organized agreeably to the Law of the land. No particular difficulty occurred until after some hundreds had assembled in that land who believed in the book of Mormon and Revelations, given through said Joseph Smith, senior. After nearly two years of peace had elapsed, a strong prejudice among the various sects arose, declaring, that Joseph Smith was a false prophet, and ought to die; and I heard a hundred say that they had never known the man, but if they could come across him they would kill him as soon as they would a rattle-snake. Frequently heard them say of those who believed in the doctrine

he promulgated, that if they did not renounce it, they would exterminate or drive them out of the country. On enquiring of them if they had any just cause for this prejudice against us, they said—' No, but Joseph Smith ought to die, and if he ever comes to this country we will kill him, G—d d—m him !"

Matters went on thus till some time in the summer of 1833, when mobs assembled in considerable bodies, frequently visiting private houses, threatening them with death and destruction instantly if they did not renounce Joe Smith as a prophet and the Book of Mormon. At the end of the summer of this year they commenced operations, instigated by their priests. They visited the house of George Bubee, called him up at the hour of midnight, and pointing many guns and pistols at his breast, beat him at the same time most unmercifully with clubs and whips. And the same night, or the night afterwards, this gang of from thirty to sixty ruffians unroofed thirteen houses of what was called the Whitsun Branch of the church in Jackson county, These scenes continued ; mobs went about from house to house, thrusting poles and rails in at the doors and windows, and tearing down numbers of the houses of the saints, turning hogs, horses, &c. into corn-fields, burning fences, &c. Some time in the month of October, they broke into the store of S. Gilbert and Co., I marched up with thirty or forty men to witness the scene, and found a man named M'Arty, brickbatting the store door with all fury, the silks, callicos, and other fine goods twined about his feet, and reaching to the door of the store house. M'Arty was arrested and taken before Squire Weston, and though seven witnesses appeared against him, he was immediately acquitted ; and the next day these seven witnesses were taken before the same magistrate, and by the testimoney of this one burglar were committed to gaol. This so exasperated my feelings, that I went with two hundred men to inquire into the affair, when I was

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promptly met by the colonel of the militia, who stated to me that the whole was a religious farce, and had grown out of a prejudice they had imbibed against Joseph Smith. I here agreed that the church would give up their arms, if the said Colonel Pilcher would take the arms from the mob. To this the colonel cheerfully agreed, and pledged his honour, together with Lieutenant Governor Boggs, Owen, and others This treaty entered into. we returned home, resting assured on their honour that we would not be again molested. But this solemn contract was violated in every sense of the word. The arms of the mob were never taken away, and the majority of the militia, to my certain knowledge, were engaged the next day with the mob (Colonel Pilcher and Boggs not excepted), going from house to house, in gangs of from sixty to seventy in number, threatening the lives of women and children if they did not leave forthwith, In this diabolical scene men were chased from their houses and homes, without any preparations from themselves and families. I was chased by one of these gangs across an open prairie for five miles, without being overtaken, and lay three weeks in the woods, and was three days and three nights without any food. In the meantime my wife and three small children, in a skiff passed down Big Blue River, and there borrowed a rug carpet of one of her friends, and made a tent of the same, which was her only shield from the inclemency of the weather, during the three weeks of my expulsion from home.

In the aforesaid persecution I saw one hundred and ninety women and children driven thirty miles across the prairie with three decrepit men only in their company, in the month of November, the ground thinly covered with sleet, and I could easily follow on their trail by the blood that flowed from their lacerated feet on the stubble of the burnt prairie. This company not knowing the situation of the country, nor the extent of Jackson County, built a considerable number

of poor cabins, which proved to be in the borders of Jackson County. The mob, infuriated at this, rushed upon them in the month of January, 1834, burnt these miserable cabins, and scattered their inhabitants to the four winds; from which cause, and the hardships they had endured, many were taken ill and died. In the meantime they burned two hundred and three houses, and a great mill, these being all the residences of the saints in Jackson County.

The most part of twelve hundred saints who resided in Jackson County, made their escape into Clay County—I would here remark that among one of the company that escaped to Clay County was a woman named Sarah Ann Heyber, who had been ill of ague and fever for some months, and another of the name of Keziah Heyber, who was under the most delicate circumstances, laid on the bank of the river, without shelter, during one of the most stormy nights I ever witnessed; while torrents of rain poured down during the whole night, and streams of the smallest size were swelled into rivers. The former woman was carried across the river apparently a lifeless corpse; the latter was delivered of a fine son on the banks, within twenty minutes after being carried across the river, under the open canopy of heaven; from which cause I have reason to believe) she died a premature death. On complaining of the treatment to the Missouri people, the only consolation we received was, "D—m you, do you believe in Joe Smith now?" During the whole of this time Joe Smith dwelt on Kirtland, in the state of Ohio. Our people had now mostly escaped into Clay County; some living in negro cabins that had been abandoned, some in gentlemen's kitchens; and thus, like men of servitude, we went to work to obtain a scanty living among the inhabitants of Clay County; and this we continued to do for two years—every advantage being taken of us in our deplorable condition.

Having found my wife in the situation before de-

scribed, and making some enquiry, I was informed that I had been hunted through Jackson, Lafayette, and Clay Counties, and also the Indian Territory, and asking why they had so much against me, the answer was, ' he believes in Joe Smith and the Book of Mormon, d—m him.' Here on the banks of the Missouri, were eight families, exiled from plenteous homes, without one particle of provisions, or any other means of getting any but hunting in the forests. I built a hut twelve feet square, against a sycamore log, in which my wife bore me a fine son on the 27th of December, 1833. The tent having neither chimney, nor floor, nor covering sufficient to shelter them from the inclemency of the weather, rendered it intolerable. Surrounded by these few friends, I left her in this doleful condition, for the express purpose of laying these matters before the American people in the other states, and travelled thirteen hundred miles through the interior of the United States—appealing to them whether such vile inhuman conduct would be tolerated in this free country. and was frequently answered, "That such conduct was not justifiable under a republican government, yet we feel bound to say that we fear Joe Smith is a very bad man, and circumstances alter cases; we would not wish to prejudge a man, but in some circumstances the voice of the people ought to rule." The most of these expressions were from professors of religion."

Thus ends the first persecution of the Mormons; the second persecution, with the death of their leader, in Pamphlet No. 2, shortly to be published

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